



KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION

BOARD NOTES

Volume 13, No. 1 Report of the February 2-3, 2005, Regular Meeting

STATE BOARD APPROVES WRITING ASSESSMENT PROPOSAL

At the February 2-3 meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education approved a proposal determining the design of the writing assessment for the CATS test, beginning in 2007. The proposal includes improvements to the writing assessment that address past criticisms of this component from teachers, administrators and the public. It will be incorporated into the Request for Proposals that is being drafted, which will describe the design of the full CATS assessment, in order for testing vendors to bid on the new testing contract later this spring. This is necessary because the current testing contract ends in September of 2006.

The model adopted by the Board accounts for writing at more grade levels and spreads writing assessment across the grades. Components of the proposal approved by the Board included:

- Accountability for the writing portfolio remaining at grades 4, 7 and 12.
- Accountability for on-demand moved to grades 5, 8 and first semester of grade 12. Also, on-demand assessment will be administered prior to the testing window for all grade levels.
- Addition of a multiple-choice assessment on conventions to assess grammar, capitalization, punctuation, etc., to grade 10.
- Three portfolio entries at the elementary level, three at the middle school level and four at the high school level.



- A modified holistic/analytical scoring process and requirement to use a double-blind, read-to-resolution scoring method for the writing portfolio.
- Portfolio audit changed to regional scoring sessions using a sampling of school populations.
- Analytical scoring process implemented for on-demand writing items.
- Expansion of performance levels to allow writing to be reported in a manner similar to other content areas (novice non-performance, novice, high novice, low apprentice, mid apprentice, high apprentice, proficient and distinguished).
- Weighting of the writing assessment changed to:
 - Elementary – Portfolio 50% of writing index; On-demand 50% of writing index
 - Middle – Portfolio 50% of writing index; On-demand 50% of writing index
 - High – Portfolio 45% of writing index; On-demand 45% of writing index; Multiple-choice conventions test 10% of writing index

As follow-up to approval of the proposal, Department staff is to pursue: (a) a study of the proposal within the context of the total CATS test design by the National Technical Advisory Panel for Assessment and Accountability (NTAPAA) to verify its validity and reliability; (b) the writing assessment's inclusion in accountability is to be based on NTAPAA's analysis of validity and reliability; and (c) an analysis of where all subjects are tested needs to occur to ensure that no grade level is over-burdened with the amount of subjects tested. More discussion on this and the design for the full CATS test, beginning in 2007, will be discussed at the April 6-7 meeting.

For more information on the writing assessment proposal, contact Starr Lewis at (502) 564-9850 or via email at slewis@kde.state.ky.us.

FORMAT FOR PRACTICAL LIVING/VOCATIONAL STUDIES AND ARTS AND HUMANITIES DETERMINED FOR CATS TEST, 2007 AND BEYOND

Commissioner Wilhoit asked the Kentucky Board of Education to approve the following three actions relative to the format for the assessments of practical living/vocational studies and arts and humanities in the CATS test, beginning in 2007:

- Continue the current format for assessing practical living/vocational studies and arts and humanities for the upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) and then study improved ways to assess these content areas during the new contract term in order for the Board to be able to agree on changes prior to issuance of the next RFP;

- Increase the number of items used to assess these content areas to be similar to the number used for the other content areas; and,
- Implement improved ways to assess practical living/vocational studies and arts and humanities via technology in the RFP to be issued this spring (2005).

The Board approved the Commissioner's recommendations because no clear consensus existed for a particular design of immediate changes and the Board wanted to show its support for continued assessment in these subject areas.

For more information on assessing these content areas, contact Mary Ann Miller at (502) 564-3141 or via email at mmiller@kde.state.ky.us.

SURVEY RESULTS OF SCHOOL AND DISTRICT READINESS FOR ON-LINE ASSESSMENTS AND OTHER LARGE-SCALE ON-LINE APPLICATIONS REPORTED

In order to gauge the state's readiness to do on-line testing and other large-scale on-line applications, the Office of Education Technology collected data from school districts on where schools and districts stand in certain key areas of technology deployment. All 176 districts responded to the survey and Associate Commissioner David Couch reported the following results to the Board at its February meeting:

- 75% of student workstations and 67% of teacher workstations are too old to run modern and near-future large-scale applications being considered by the Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky Board of Education.
- Only 29% of student workstations and 38% of teacher workstations in Kentucky schools have a modern operating system (Windows XP and Mac OS 10).
- Close to 75% of workstations have access to very high speed and efficient networks. Also, within schools, 99% of the classrooms and 96% of the workstations within schools are connected to schools' internal networks.
- Only 3% of workstations in schools use wireless networks within the school.
- Within the districts, 52% of schools are connected to the district-wide area network hub by fiber. Four percent use cable, coax or wireless, 37% use a single T1 line and 7% still have less than a T1.
- At the state level, 0 districts are connected from the state to the district hub sites by fiber. 115 districts have a single T1 connection and 61 have multiple T1 connections.
- In order to efficiently access thick applications located at the district office, approximately 44% need to upgrade their school to district hub connections.

- In order for schools to efficiently access thick applications located on servers at the state level or outside of the state, 100% of districts need to have upgrades in their district to state connections.
- 70% of Kentucky's teachers meet Kentucky's technology skills teacher requirements.
- 121 districts teach students keyboarding skills by 4th grade.
- The average district has less than 3 people to operate and maintain their existing technology services to schools.

Based upon the data cited above, the Board was apprised that in the last five years, Kentucky's aging technology in schools has resulted in Kentucky falling from near the top in the nation to 48th among the states relative to education technology. Furthermore, Department staff noted that maintenance of the Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS) has not been funded at the recommended level creating inequities and inadequacies in student access to education technology. Thus, the bottom line communicated to the Board was that Kentucky's aging technology significantly limits the state's ability to implement CATS on-line assessment or other large-scale technology applications.

For more information on the technology survey data, contact Associate Commissioner David Couch at (502) 564-2020 or via email at dcouch@kde.state.ky.us.

***STATE BOARD APPROVES LETTER TO LEGISLATURE ADVOCATING
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION***

At its February 2-3, 2005 meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education reviewed Governor Fletcher's proposed budget that was submitted to the General Assembly under the current conditions of severe revenue shortages. Though the Board indicated its understanding that shortfalls cannot be resolved overnight, the members voiced great concern that if additional funding is not made available in education, the economic future of our Commonwealth will be in jeopardy.

Therefore, the Board sent the following letter to all members of the General Assembly:

February 3, 2005

Dear General Assembly Member:

The KBE knows that you share our vision – that “Every child, regardless of parentage or poverty, geography or location, will receive a world-class education to prepare for productive adult life, continuing education and responsible citizenship.” We appreciate your historic commitment to improving public education for the students of Kentucky.

Under your leadership, this state decided 15 years ago that continuous improvement in elementary and secondary education is the only hope for our future. And so together we have raised the bar for our schools. We have insisted on continuous improvement. We are requiring all of our schools to meet the high standard of proficiency or beyond by 2014 or sooner. We have made significant progress. Some schools have already proved that it can be done. But, we have far to go. We understand the state's economic climate in its historical context. We know that severe revenue shortages are not created, or resolved, over night.

The growing challenges to education funding for Kentucky's schools include the following:

- The 1990 General Assembly raised new revenue to support our landmark reform, but spending on K-12 education as a percentage of the General Fund has declined from a high of 48% in 1994 to 42.1% in 2004, a decrease of 5.9%.
- The Support Education Excellence in Kentucky formula, by which basic funding is allocated to local school districts, has not kept pace with inflation. The SEEK formula, including the transportation component, is not fully funded. Because of the unanticipated growth in attendance, the final 2004-2005 SEEK calculation was reduced by 1%, the same percentage salaries were increased.
- Salary increases mandated but not fully funded have caused districts to use most or all of their additional state revenue on salaries. In some cases, districts have had to spend more than their additional state revenue to meet these mandates. And, even with mandated salary increases, Kentucky has not been able to maintain the increase in teacher salary among the states that it realized in the mid-1990s.
- Maintenance of the Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS) has not been funded by the state at the recommended level, creating inequities and inadequacies in student access to education technology. In the last five years, Kentucky's aging education technology in the schools has resulted in Kentucky falling from near the top in the nation to 48th among the states relative to education technology. This will not keep us competitive in today's world. In addition, this aging technology significantly limits our ability to implement CATS on-line assessment.
- The mandated preschool program, shown by research to make a valuable difference in the learning of targeted students, has never been fully funded by state revenue.
- All-day kindergarten is not state-funded but is viewed as a critical component for student success.

- Most categorical programs (the KERA educational programs outside the SEEK formula) have seen reductions in state revenue, while the need for services by students, and the costs of these services, have continued to increase.
- Preschool and all-day kindergarten have created a need for additional and upgraded facilities. The School Facilities Construction Commission has been under funded for years.
- Health insurance costs for district and school employees continue to increase at double-digit levels and consume a significant amount of the proposed 2005-06 education appropriation increase.
- To meet Kentucky's high educational standards, additional instructional days are desperately needed, as well as additional time for professional development.
- Kentucky's population of Limited English Proficient students is the fifth fastest growing in the nation, and these students require additional services for which funds are not provided by the state.

We know you understand our mission -- to focus the efforts of the Kentucky Department of Education, local schools, districts and partners to help all schools meet proficiency by 2014 and to assure that every single Kentucky child is given the maximum opportunity to achieve at high levels. It is our responsibility to advocate for investing in our children and in the future of our state.

You know that our priorities – early childhood education; technology; SEEK – are not adequately funded.

For these reasons, the Kentucky Board of Education supports a tax modernization that will generate additional resources adequate for educating Kentucky's children. Further, we ask that tax modernization generate additional resources, both short term and long term, to ensure a bright and competitive future for the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Keith Travis, Chair
Kentucky Board of Education

Gene Wilhoit, Commissioner
Kentucky Department of Education

For more information on the Board's letter to the General Assembly, contact Mary Ann Miller at (502) 564-3141 or via email at mmiller@kde.state.ky.us.

END-OF-COURSE ASSESSMENTS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

In June 2004, the Kentucky Board of Education directed the Kentucky Department of Education to develop end-of-course assessments in the content areas required for high school graduation. The Board was reminded that the Department's intention is to make end-of-course assessments available in mathematics, science, English/language arts, social studies and world languages. It was noted that the first priority will be mathematics and science. Within mathematics and science, Department staff identified Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry and Physics as receiving initial focus.

The initial development schedule for these assessments was shared as follows:

- Algebra I end-of-course assessment piloted spring 2005 and available for statewide use, along with formative classroom assessments, in fall 2005.
- Work on Geometry, Algebra II, and Physics end-of-course assessments to begin spring 2005 with pilots in fall 2005 and statewide availability spring 2006.

A presentation by two of the five districts partnering in the end-of-course development work occurred at the February meeting. Superintendent Paul Upchurch, Elizabethtown Independent, and Superintendent Dale Brown, Warren County, shared the work done so far by their teachers on this initiative. Dr. Bill Bush, project facilitator, was also part of the presentation. Other districts that are involved are Oldham, Shelby and Jessamine Counties.

At this point, the Board expressed that end-of-course assessments will be offered to schools and districts as a tool they may access to enhance student learning and to increase student accountability.

For more information on end-of-course assessments, contact Linda Pittenger at (502) 564-4772 or via email at lpitteng@kde.state.ky.us.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED BY THE BOARD AT ITS FEBRUARY 2-3, 2005, MEETING WERE:

- Minutes from the December 8-9, 2004, and January 5, 2005, regular meetings
- 2004-05 Local District Tax Rates Levied for Leslie County and Southgate and Frankfort Independents
- District Facility Plans for Christian, Elliott, Fayette, Jackson, Lee, Magoffin and Webster Counties and Pineville Independent
- 702 KAR 3:030, Insurance Requirements (Final)
- 702 KAR 5:110, Reimbursement for Vocational Pupil Transportation (Final)

- Full funding for the SEEK Transportation Funding Formula as part of the Board's 2005 Legislative Agenda
- Appointment of Jeffrey Schlosser to the KHSAA Board of Control
- Waiver request of 702 KAR 5:080 from the Floyd County School District to allow an assistance animal on the bus
- 704 KAR 3:035, Annual Professional Development Plan (Final)
- Statement of Consideration for 704 KAR 7:120, Home/Hospital Instruction
- KSB Facilities Plan to include the addition of a representative from the Clifton neighborhood and head of the advisory board in future planning efforts and for the planning committee to provide input on future locations of programs
- Process for providing support to low-performing schools not currently identified as in assistance through use of Commonwealth School Improvement Funds
- Appointment of David Webb (Chair), Hilma Prather and Keith Travis to the Board's subcommittee on Appeals of Performance Judgment
- Delegation of appeals of performance judgment to be heard by a hearing officer

ITEMS REVIEWED BY THE BOARD AT ITS FEBRUARY 2-3, 2005, MEETING WITH NO ACTION TAKEN WERE:

- Auditor of Public Accounts Audit Findings and Kentucky Department of Education response
- Visits to Jefferson County Schools regarding the School Breakfast Program
- KDE Employment Report
- Other assessment issues affecting the Request for Proposals
- Minority Applicants for Certified Vacancies in Kentucky School Districts
- Revisions to assessment regulations to incorporate additional Federal flexibility
- English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessment Status Report
- Report on possible bill to amend the SEEK funding formula
- 702 KAR 6:100, Appeal procedures for school and community nutrition programs
- 702 KAR 7:065, Designation of Agent to Manage High School Interscholastic Athletics
- KHSAA Title IX update
- KHSAA Annual Reporting Requirements
- Update on reviewing, updating and organizing the Content and Student Performance Standards
- GoHigher Kentucky Demonstration
- Reading First and Early Reading Incentive Grant/Read to Achieve Update
- Update on KSB facility plan, process for continuing communication with the Danville community regarding KSD, status of the KSB/KSD Implementation Plan, visits to the Indiana and Tennessee Schools for the Blind; and discussion of major terminology pertinent to issues around closing the achievement gap for students with disabilities and presentation from schools that are closing this gap
- Research report titled "Inside the Black Box of High Performing, High Poverty Schools" prepared for the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence with financial support from the Ford Foundation
- Hearing Officer's Report

KBE MEETING DATES 2005

<u>2005</u>	<u>Type of Meeting</u>	<u>Location</u>
April 6-7, 2005	Regular meeting	Frankfort
May 17-18, 2005	KBE retreat and preliminary budget discussion	Kentucky Dam Village State Park
June 8-9, 2005	Regular meeting	Frankfort
August 3-4, 2005	Regular meeting and commissioner's evaluation	Frankfort
September 14, 2005	Regular meeting	Frankfort
October 5-6, 2005	Regular meeting	Frankfort
November 2, 2005	Regular meeting	Frankfort
December 7-8, 2005	Regular meeting	Frankfort

KBE MEETING DATES 2006

<u>2006</u>	<u>Type of Meeting</u>	<u>Location</u>
January 4, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
February 1-2, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
March 8, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
April 5-6, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
May 10-11, 2006	KBE retreat and strategic plan discussion	*TBD
June 7-8, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
July 5, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
August 2-3, 2006	Regular meeting and commissioner's evaluation	Frankfort
September 6, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
October 4-5, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
November 1, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
December 6-7, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort

*TBD – To be determined

For more information on the meeting dates, contact Mary Ann Miller at 502-564-3141 or via email at mmiller@kde.state.ky.us or Susan Palmer at 502-564-3141 or via email at spalmer@kde.state.ky.us.

The actions described above were taken in open session of the Kentucky Board of Education at the February 2-3, 2005, regular meeting conducted in the State Board Room, Capital Plaza Tower, 1st Floor, Frankfort, Kentucky. This information is provided in summary form, and an official record of the meeting is available on tape in the permanent records of the Kentucky Board of Education, First Floor, Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601. These records are open for inspection Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

For additional information about the Kentucky Board of Education meetings, agendas, minutes or special accommodations needed for attending meetings, contact Mary Ann Miller, Policy Coordinator at (502) 564-3141.

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